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Giving Thanks for Global Partnership and Progress



LWR / Jake Lyell

With the season on gratitude upon us here in the United States, I wanted to take a moment to thank Feed the Future's vast network of partners, at home and abroad, who are helping achieve our shared vision of a world without hunger, poverty and undernutrition.

As the deputy coordinator for development for the U.S. Government's global hunger and food security initiative, [Feed the Future](#), I feel particularly grateful this year for the many partners who have labored over the years to end hunger—and for those who have, more recently, stepped forward to join us in this mission. The [incredible gains](#) we have collectively made in just a few years are a testament to what we can achieve when we focus, together, on a common goal.

Last year alone, Feed the Future reached nearly 7 million smallholder farmers worldwide with tools and technologies to help increase their yields and reached more than 12.5 million children with nutrition interventions. Exciting new data shows that, with our support, farmers in Zambia achieved record maize harvests over the past year. In Ethiopia, through Feed the Future and other U.S. Government initiatives, we contributed to remarkable declines in stunting among young children, with the rate dropping 9 percent over the past three years. That means an estimated 160,000 children will have a better chance of reaching their full potential without malnutrition holding them back.

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Efforts like these are making a difference. They're helping smallholder farmers contribute to, and benefit from, more dynamic economies. As we've said before, we used to think our job was done when we taught a farmer how to plant a new crop. But today, our job isn't done until we also help her – and her neighbor – learn how to run a successful business too. Increasingly, this means helping young men and women develop the skills and opportunities to become the [next generation](#) of agricultural leaders and “[agropreneurs](#).”

Even with this progress, there is much still to do: 800 million people around the world still suffer from hunger. We can do better and strive together to do so every day. The [momentum](#) to end hunger is strong, and along with our partners around the world, we [believe](#) we can continue to make a difference.

This was clear at an event organized by the U.S. non-profit network InterAction last week on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. Senators Bob Casey and Mike Johanns provided opening remarks and I joined a panel moderated by Allan Jury of the World Food Program USA. Hewan Degu, a fellow with the Feed the Future-supported African Women in Agricultural Research and Development Fellowship program, Margaret Zeigler of the Global Harvest Initiative, Montague Demment of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities, and Paul Miller of Lutheran World Relief joined me to discuss how the United States can continue to strengthen its leadership in improving global food security and nutrition.

It was a powerful discussion that focused on how partners are coming together through Feed the Future and complementary global efforts to boost agricultural development to spur economic growth that can make a transformative impact on hunger, poverty, and undernutrition. Degu said that these efforts aren't just helping individual communities, they are helping nations and, in turn, overall global stability.

Senator Johanns commented that people are living because of U.S. Government-led initiatives like Feed the Future and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and that there is truly no greater calling. I couldn't agree with him more.

So, as we kick off the holiday season in the United States, I wish you a happy Thanksgiving filled with friends, family and [nutritious food](#). If you're looking for a last-minute dish for your Thanksgiving table this year, consider any of these wonderful recipes that people from around the world submitted to Feed the Future's recent [sweet potato recipe contest](#). You can even tell your guests that the sweet potato dish you're serving is more than just delicious: It's packed with vitamin A and, in many countries, this [mighty vegetable](#) is helping combat hunger, poverty and poor nutrition. It's just one example among many of how, by bringing partners together, we are making gains against hunger.

This is something we can all be proud of—and thankful for—this holiday season.

As you think about what you're grateful for this Thanksgiving, I'd encourage you to consider this: How will you [feed the future](#)? Share your thoughts with us on Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag [#feedthefuture](#).